

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: Coastal Ecosystem Resiliency Grants Program

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NMFS-HCPO-2015-2004410

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.463, Habitat Conservation

Dates: Applications must be postmarked, provided to a delivery service, or received by www.Grants.gov by 11:59 PM Eastern Time on July 2, 2015. Use of a delivery service must be documented with a receipt. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted. In addition, applicants are advised that they must provide approval from the State Governor as evidenced by a letter or other form of documented correspondence for the proposed project by July 31, 2015. Before awards are made, NOAA will verify that correspondence from the State Governor has been received. See also Section III.C of this FFO.

Funding Opportunity Description: The principal objective of the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) Coastal Ecosystem Resiliency Grants solicitation is to implement projects that use a proactive approach to improve or restore coastal habitat to: 1) strengthen the resilience of U.S. marine and coastal ecosystems to decrease the vulnerability of communities to extreme weather and 2) support sustainable fisheries and contribute to the recovery of protected resources. Applications submitted under this solicitation will be selected based on their ability to demonstrate how the proposed project will enhance the resiliency of U.S. marine and coastal ecosystems to the impacts of extreme weather and changing environmental conditions thereby increasing community resilience and providing habitat to threatened and endangered species listed under the Endangered Species Act (hereafter, Listed Species), fish stocks managed under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (hereafter, Managed Species), or other marine and coastal species with a nexus to NMFS management (such as through the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act, Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, Coral Reef Conservation Act, or NMFS Species of Concern). Successful applications will 1) identify an issue limiting the resiliency of U.S. marine and coastal ecosystems to extreme weather events or changing environmental conditions at the proposed project site; 2) identify the proposed project's outcome goal(s) and describe in detail the actions and on-the-ground restoration to be undertaken to enhance resiliency and reduce risk and; 3) describe the measurable impact on the ecosystem, target species, and surrounding coastal communities to benefit from the proposed habitat restoration

project.

Applications selected for funding through this solicitation will primarily be funded through cooperative agreements. Total anticipated funding for all awards is up to \$4 million. NOAA anticipates typical awards will range from \$500,000 to \$1 million. NOAA will not accept applications requesting less than \$200,000 or more than \$2 million in federal funds from NOAA under this solicitation. Federal funds awarded under this program must be matched with non federal funds (cash or in-kind cost share) at a 2:1 ratio of federal-to-non-federal contributions. For example, an applicant requesting \$500,000 in federal funding must provide at least \$250,000 in non-federal matching contributions, for a total budget of \$750,000. NOAA will only award funds to proposed projects that receive approval of the State's Governor as evidenced by a letter or other form of documented correspondence. Funds will be administered by the NOAA Restoration Center.

This funding opportunity is one of two Federal Funding Opportunities (FFO) being administered by NOAA to build coastal resilience. The companion competition, the Regional Coastal Resilience Grants Program is being administered by NOAA's National Ocean Service to undertake activities that build resilience of coastal regions, communities, and economic sectors to the negative impacts from extreme weather events, climate hazards, and changing ocean conditions. The Regional Coastal Resilience Grants FFO is expected to be posted in May 2015 and may be found on www.grants.gov at FFO number NOAA-NOS-OCM-2015-2004324.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The principal objective of the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) Coastal Ecosystem Resiliency Grants solicitation is to support projects that use a proactive approach to improve or restore coastal habitat to 1) strengthen the resilience of U.S. marine and coastal ecosystems to decrease the vulnerability of communities to extreme weather and 2) support sustainable fisheries and contribute to the recovery of protected resources. Applications should demonstrate how the proposed project will enhance the resiliency of U.S. marine and coastal ecosystems to impacts of extreme weather and changing environmental conditions thereby increasing community resilience and providing habitat to threatened and endangered species listed under the Endangered Species Act (hereafter, Listed Species), fish stocks managed under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (hereafter, Managed Species), or other marine and coastal species with a nexus to NMFS management (such as through the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act, Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, Coral Reef Conservation Act, or NMFS Species of Concern). Successful applications will 1) identify the issue limiting the resiliency of U.S. marine and coastal ecosystems to extreme weather events or changing environmental conditions at the proposed project site; 2) identify the proposed project's outcome goal(s) and describe in detail the actions and on-the-ground restoration to be undertaken to enhance resiliency and reduce risk and; 3) describe the measurable impact on the ecosystem, target species (e.g. Listed or Managed species), and surrounding coastal communities to benefit from the proposed habitat restoration project.

Applications submitted in response to this solicitation should propose projects that restore functional coastal ecosystems to build resilience to extreme weather events and protect communities while also providing healthy habitat to support sustainable fisheries (Managed Species) and the recovery of Listed Species under NOAA jurisdiction. Projects that restore tidal marshes, floodplains, free flowing riverine systems, coral reefs, and living shorelines can provide naturally resilient features such as flood reduction and protection while also providing critical habitat for fish to reproduce and develop. Proposed restoration projects that directly result in resilient ecosystems with the greatest capacity to provide habitat and reduce the vulnerability of coastal communities to extreme weather and changing environmental conditions will be most successful under this solicitation.

A primary objective of this solicitation is to implement projects that result from collaboration among stakeholders including coastal communities, local and state agencies, academic institutions, tribes, nonprofit organizations, and federal agencies. Applicants can

demonstrate this collaboration by proposing ecosystem-based restoration projects that result from recommendations and strategies outlined in multi-stakeholder studies and comprehensive planning efforts that address ecosystem resiliency, seek to minimize risks associated with extreme weather events, and provide for adaptation to known or potential climate change impacts.

Multiple project sites may be included within one application; however, applicants seeking funds for restoration across multiple sites should propose restoration sites that are hydrologically or ecologically connected, follow a comprehensive and integrated approach, and feature shared or complementary outcome goals. NOAA anticipates that the period of performance for most awards will be 36 months. See Section II.B of this FFO for more information about the period of performance of projects funded under this competition.

B. Program Priorities

The program priorities for this funding opportunity primarily support NOAA's "Ecosystems" mission goal of "Protect, Restore, and Manage Use of Coastal and Ocean Resources through Ecosystem-Based Management." Coastal ecosystem resiliency projects are expected to include efforts such as 1) actions that contribute to the restoration of degraded or altered marine, estuarine, coastal, and riverine habitats to functioning, resilient ecosystems and 2) techniques that restore healthy spawning or rearing habitat for target fish species (e.g. Managed or Listed species). High priority will be given to proposed project applications that address the following goals:

- restore habitat to support healthy fish populations and provide sustainable and lasting ecosystem functions that reduce hazard vulnerability and risks posed to U.S. coastal communities from extreme weather events, changing environmental conditions, and allow for adaptation to known or potential climate change impacts;
- demonstrate collaboration among multiple stakeholders, including state and federal agencies, by proposing projects that implement ecosystem-based restoration recommendations and site-specific strategies outlined in coastal vulnerability or resiliency studies and comprehensive planning efforts;
- result in socio-economic benefits associated with the restoration of healthy and resilient U.S. coastal ecosystems, such as increased economic activity, enhanced recreation including fishing, increased value of property, changes in human well-being, improved or protected infrastructure, decreased flooding impacts, elimination of safety hazards, and/or reduced maintenance costs;
- implement on-the-ground restoration actions that will begin within 12 months of the

proposed award start date, will result in immediate beneficial impacts, and achieve the stated ecosystem resiliency and habitat goals in a short period of time; and

- receive approval from the State Governor as evidenced by a letter or other form of documented correspondence for the proposed project by July 31, 2015.

Furthermore, while all types and phases of restoration addressing the goals of this solicitation will be considered, priority may be given to the following methods:

- removal of dams and in-stream barriers such as culverts to restore migratory fish habitat and naturally functioning river systems and eliminate risks associated with outdated structures, particularly during extreme weather events;
- hydrologic reconnection through techniques such as the removal or modification of infrastructure (e.g. levees, dikes, tide gates) to restore wetlands (e.g. estuarine and tidal wetlands, floodplains) to provide habitat for multiple fish species and increase ecosystem resiliency to protect communities; and
- creation of living shorelines that provide habitat benefits, protect natural shoreline ecosystems, and allow for adaption to known or potential climate change impacts such as sea level rise.

C. Program Authority

The Secretary of Commerce is authorized under the following statutes to provide grants and cooperative agreements for habitat restoration and conservation: Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act 16 U.S.C. 661, as amended by the Reorganization Plan No. 4 of 1970; Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2006, 16 U.S.C. 1891a; and Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1535.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

Total anticipated funding for all awards is up to \$4 million, subject to the availability of appropriations. NOAA anticipates typical awards will range from \$500,000 to \$1 million. NOAA will not accept applications requesting less than \$200,000 or more than \$2 million in federal funds from NOAA under this solicitation. Federal funds awarded under this program must be matched with non-federal funds (cash or in-kind services) at a 2:1 ratio of federal to non-federal contributions. For example, an applicant requesting \$500,000 in federal funding must provide at least \$250,000 in non-federal matching contributions, for a total budget of \$750,000. The exact amount of funds that may be awarded will be

determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA. NOAA will only award funds to projects that receive and demonstrate approval of the State's Governor to implement the proposed project as evidenced by a letter or other form of documented correspondence by July 31, 2015. Any funds provided to successful applicants will be at the discretion of the NOAA Office of Habitat Conservation and the NOAA Grants Management Division (GMD).

In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for application preparation costs if programs fail to receive funding or are cancelled because of other agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. There is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for all top-ranked applications. The number of awards to be made as a result of this solicitation will depend on the number of eligible applications received, the amount of funds requested for coastal ecosystem resiliency projects, and the merit and ranking of the applications.

This funding opportunity is one of two Federal Funding Opportunities being administered by NOAA to build coastal resilience. The companion competition, the Regional Coastal Resilience Grants Program, is being administered by NOAA's National Ocean Service to undertake activities that build resilience of coastal regions, communities, and economic sectors to the negative impacts from extreme weather events, climate hazards, and changing ocean conditions. The Regional Coastal Resilience Grants FFO is expected to be posted in May 2015 and may be found on www.grants.gov at FFO number NOAA-NOS-OCM-2015-2004324.

B. Project/Award Period

Applications should cover a period of performance between 12 and 36 months. NOAA anticipates that the period of performance for most awards will be for 36 months, but may award a project where the period of performance extends up to 48 months. The earliest anticipated start date for awards will be October 1, 2015, but awards may not be available until December 1, 2015. Pre-award costs are generally unallowable, however, pre-award costs may be considered during pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA. Incurring pre-award costs before NOAA GMD provides an award document is at the applicant's own risk. Permission to extend the period of performance beyond that stated in award documentation should be requested in writing at least 60 days in advance of an award's expiration date, as per NOAA Award Conditions.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Selected applications will primarily be funded through cooperative agreements since

NOAA staff will be substantially involved in many aspects of the awards. Substantial NOAA involvement may include, but is not limited to, hands-on technical assistance; participation in feasibility studies, design plan preparation, regulatory guidance, and construction oversight to ensure benefits are realized; support in development of appropriate monitoring protocols to ensure project performance can be evaluated; tracking the progression of the project through site visits and progress report evaluation; and involvement in public meetings and events to discuss or highlight coastal ecosystem resilience and habitat restoration activities supported through the program.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are institutions of higher education, non-profits, commercial (for profit) organizations, U.S. territories, and state, local and Native American tribal governments. Applications from individuals, federal agencies, or employees of federal agencies will not be considered. Individuals and federal agencies are strongly encouraged to work with states, non-governmental organizations, municipal and county governments, and others that are eligible to apply.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

Federal funds awarded under this program must be matched with non-federal funds (cash or in-kind services) at a 2:1 ratio of federal to non-federal contributions. For example, an applicant requesting \$500,000 in federal funding must provide at least \$250,000 in non-federal matching contributions, for a total budget of \$750,000. Furthermore, applicants should note that cost sharing is an element considered in Evaluation Criterion #4 "Project Costs" (Section V.A.4.). Federal sources cannot be considered for matching funds, but can be described in the budget narrative to demonstrate additional leverage and collaboration. Applications selected for funding will be bound by the percentage of cost sharing reflected in the award document signed by the NOAA Grants Officer.

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

Section III.A presents information distinguishing eligible versus ineligible organization types. Projects must occur in U.S. coastal ecosystems or watersheds supporting diadromous fish. Projects in the Commonwealths and Territories of the United States, for this solicitation defined as American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico, are eligible, but those in the Freely Associated States are not eligible for funding consideration. Project applications that solely benefit freshwater fish species or Listed Species under the jurisdiction of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service are not eligible.

All applications MUST contain ALL required forms; if these forms are not signed via the www.Grants.gov application process, they MUST be signed in ink. Paper applications should also be accompanied by a CD or DVD with the entire application as one Adobe PDF file. Paper applications without inked signatures on their forms will be ineligible and will not be reviewed. Application forms are available on www.Grants.gov. As stated in Section II.A, under this solicitation, NOAA will not accept applications requesting less than \$200,000 or more than \$2 million in federal funds from NOAA.

Applicants should also note that the following activities will not be considered: (1) activities that constitute legally required mitigation for the adverse effects of an activity regulated or otherwise governed by local, state or federal law; (2) activities that constitute restoration for natural resource damages under federal, state or local law; and (3) activities that are required by a separate consent decree, court order, statute or regulation. Project types that will not be considered include (1) land acquisition and (2) beach re-nourishment.

NOAA will establish cooperative agreement awards with applicants that have successfully received approval from their State's Governor for the proposed project. If documented Governor approval has not been obtained and provided to NOAA for project applications by July 31, 2015, the application will not be recommended to NOAA's Grants Management Division (GMD) for an award in FY15. This requirement does not apply when the applicant is a federally recognized Tribe, conducting a project within the bounds of Tribal land.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Complete application packages, including required federal forms and instructions, can be found on www.Grants.gov. If a prospective applicant is having difficulty downloading the application forms from www.Grants.gov, contact www.Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@Grants.gov.

B. Content and Form of Application

Applicants should apply through the www.Grants.gov website. A complete standard NOAA financial assistance application package should be submitted in accordance with the guidelines in this document. Each application must include the application forms from the SF-424 form family:

- Application for Federal Assistance: Form SF-424 (7/03 version or newer)
- Budget Information for Non-construction Programs: Form SF-424A (prior to award, a

Form SF-424A for each year of funding will be required)

- Assurances for Non-construction Programs: Form SF-424B
- Certification Regarding Lobbying: Form CD-511
- Disclosure of Lobbying Activities: Form SF-LLL (if applicable)

In addition, NOAA recommends the following as part of a complete application package:

- Project summary (described below, 2 page limit);
- Project narrative (described below, 15 page limit);
- A detailed budget justification (described below, 2 page limit);
- A data sharing plan (described below, 2 page limit)
- Project design plans;
- Other relevant supporting materials (15 page limit) such as:
 - A site location map such as a USGS topographic quadrangle map or aerial photo with site location(s) highlighted
 - Brief curriculum vitae or resume for up to three key personnel (maximum of one page per person) and any examples of projects similar in scope and nature that have been successfully completed by the project team;
 - A letter documenting land owner and private/public land manager support;
 - Any other relevant supporting materials such as letters of support (including those from adjoining landowners and those documenting financial and in-kind support), indirect cost rate agreements, monitoring plans, and site photos; and
- A letter documenting approval from the State Governor for the proposed project.

Applications submitted through the www.Grants.gov website should include a maximum of three files (PDF files only) in addition to the Federal application forms: 1) Summary, narrative, budget justification, and data sharing plan (not to exceed 21 pages total, as outlined above); 2) Project designs; and 3) Supplemental Information - all other attachments combined into one indexed file, such as maps, curriculum vitae, and support letters, not to exceed 15 pages. Page limits assume a 12 point font and 1 inch margins. Reviewers are not required to review information provided in excess of stated page limits. Information about converting documents to PDF files is available on the Grants.gov website under

"Download Software" under "Applicant Resources."

1. Project Summary (2 page limit):

- Applicant Organization
- Project Title
- Site Location - nearest town or watershed, and geographic coordinates
- Brief Project Description/Executive Summary: Briefly describe the activities to be implemented with the requested funds including: 1) the issue limiting the resiliency of marine and coastal ecosystems to extreme weather events or changing environmental conditions; 2) the proposed project's outcome goal(s) and detailed actions and on-the-ground restoration to be undertaken to enhance resiliency and reduce risk and; 3) the measurable impact on the ecosystem, target species, and surrounding coastal communities to benefit from the proposed habitat restoration project.
- Project Performance Measures and Outcomes: Common measures used for habitat restoration may include, but are not limited to: Number of acres to be restored; stream miles to be made accessible to diadromous fish through the proposed activities; increased value of property or recreation, including fishing; changes in human well-being or economic activity; and any other measureable anticipated long-term resiliency, ecological, and socioeconomic outcomes.
- Project Time Line, including an Implementation Start Date (e.g. on-the-ground construction start date) for the proposed project activities (not proposed award start date).
- Permits and Approvals - identify and list all consultations, permits, and regulatory approvals necessary for the proposed project and their status (e.g. not applied for, pending, secured).
- Land Owner - name and address (if privately owned) or public agency contact and their level of support for the proposed project.
- Amount of Funding Requested.
- Total Federal Funds Requested & Non-Federal Match Proposed.
- Overall Project Cost.

2. Project Narrative (15 page limit):

The project narrative should closely follow the organization of the evaluation criteria (see Section V. A. Evaluation Criteria) for the application to receive a consistent review against competing applications. Project applications should clearly 1) identify the issue limiting the resiliency of marine and coastal ecosystems to extreme weather events or changing environmental conditions at the proposed project site; 2) identify the proposed project's outcome goal(s) and describe in detail the actions and on-the-ground restoration to be undertaken to enhance resiliency and reduce risk and; 3) describe the measurable impact on the ecosystem, target species, and surrounding coastal communities to benefit from the proposed habitat restoration project.

The narrative should succinctly describe the historic condition of the project site and the coastal ecosystem resiliency conditions to be addressed as the primary focus of the proposed project. The narrative should fully describe the extent to which the proposed coastal ecosystem restoration actions will increase resiliency to extreme weather events and changing environmental conditions such as sea-level rise and increased frequency and magnitude of flooding events. The narrative should identify the target fish species (e.g. Managed or Listed Species), their historic and current status or population estimates, and the extent to which they will benefit from the proposed project. The narrative should also highlight the relevant planning efforts associated with the project and any synergies with other resiliency or conservation efforts in the watershed, especially Endangered Species Act (ESA) recovery plans, fishery management plans, green infrastructure planning, or other conservation and resiliency studies, strategic planning or management documents (e.g. USACE's North Atlantic Coast Comprehensive Study: Resilient Adaptation to Increasing Risk). Any community benefits such as increased economic activity, enhanced recreation including fishing, increased value of property, changes in human well-being, improved or protected infrastructure, decreased flooding impacts, elimination of safety hazards, and/or reduced maintenance costs that may result from the proposed project should also be described within the project narrative.

The short-term objectives and long-term ecosystem resiliency and habitat restoration goals of the proposed activities should be clearly identified within the project narrative. The project narrative should also describe the anticipated impact of the proposed project on the resiliency of the ecosystem to extreme weather events and changing environmental conditions. Detailed, technical information about the proposed project activities and site should be fully described. For each site, applicants should clearly identify the project phase(s) proposed (e.g. engineering design, construction) and detail the implementation plan, including proposed implementation techniques. For applicants proposing design and permitting activities, a detailed scope of services or tasks to be completed under this award should be included in the application. For applicants proposing restoration implementation, design plans, specifications, required permits and consultations, scope of work for services, and cost estimates should be included in the application.

Applicants proposing to alter tidal exchange should also provide a hydrograph showing any tidal restrictions and projected conditions with restoration. Applicants proposing to install fish passage devices or operational control structures like self-regulating tide gates as a component of the project should include discussion of a management plan that details who will be responsible for the operation and maintenance of such structures and how they will be operated and maintained in the future. Applicants proposing to enhance existing tidal wetlands, including beneficial re-use of dredged material to increase elevation to keep pace with sea level rise and subsidence, should provide information on the source of the dredge materials, the site-specific rate of sea level rise and subsidence, target elevation, and how the restored site will keep pace with the rate of sea level rise and subsidence. Applicants proposing to place plants or animals into the environment should include the origin/source and regional genetic stock of the plant or animal, and describe the proximity to any existing or remnant sources of similar type in the area.

The project narrative should include a timeline with key milestones identified and detail how the project will be completed within the specified time period. This includes identifying all consultation and permitting requirements and their status (e.g. not applied for, pending, secured), as well as a commitment to quickly provide information needed by NOAA to analyze project impacts under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA, see Section VI.B.2). For projects with NEPA documents completed or under development, please indicate the status and level of NEPA review (CE, EA, EIS), the lead federal agency, contact information for the lead federal agency person, and where copies of the document are available.

Applicants should clearly describe how the proposed restoration project design, methodology, and techniques will increase resiliency of the ecosystem and account for or provide for adaptation to known or potential climate change impacts. To protect the federal investment, the narrative should describe future management, beyond the period of performance, including mechanisms to protect, maintain, or sustain the project site so the effects of the funded project can maintain its resiliency and benefits to the target species and their habitat decades into the future despite extreme weather events and changing environmental conditions such as sea-level rise and increased frequency and magnitude of flooding events.

Proposals should use outcome-based performance measures when feasible and appropriate. All project applications with on-the-ground restoration actions should include a discrete implementation monitoring component to assess whether a directed restoration action was carried out as designed and, as appropriate, determine if the restoration action is providing a basic level of effectiveness. Implementation monitoring plans should: 1) include parameters that evaluate short-term structural changes at the project site (e.g. as-built surveys), but should also include basic measures of effectiveness (e.g. presence/absence of

target species); 2) propose pre-implementation data collection, when applicable; 3) include parameters with quantitative or clearly defined targets; and 4) include parameters with targets that can be met within 1-2 years post-implementation. For projects including socio-economic measures that demonstrate societal benefits and potential impacts of the project, the projects should demonstrate whether baseline performance measures can be collected before project implementation, during the project, and/or after implementation is complete. When possible, measures should readily be compared and integrated with measures used by related projects to support scaling up performance information across projects and adaptive management actions. Applicants are expected to work with NOAA during pre-award negotiation to ensure that the proposed monitoring parameters are adequate, measurable, and will result in a meaningful project performance evaluation. Guidance on implementation monitoring for select restoration types are available at www.restoration.noaa.gov/partnerresources.

If multiple restoration sites are included within one application, the proposed restoration activities should be hydrologically or ecologically connected, follow a comprehensive and integrated approach, and feature shared or complementary outcome goals. Applications that include multiple restoration sites should also fully describe the proposed activity at each site within the project narrative section. If page limits are restrictive, focus the application on the technical aspects of the proposed actions and on those actions with highest priority funding needs. If you cannot describe all aspects of a multi-site project within the recommended page limits, applicants should consider submitting more than one application.

3. Budget Justification (2 pages):

The narrative budget justification must include a detailed breakdown by category of cost (object class) separated into federal and non-federal shares as they relate to specific aspects of the award, with a detailed narrative justification for both the federal and non-federal shares. Applicants should indicate whether or not the proposed non-federal share has been secured or not. The object classes should match those found in the Form SF-424A.

If funding will be used to complete part of a larger project with multiple funding sources, a budget overview for the entire project to demonstrate how the NOAA request relates to the overall project budget and outcomes should be provided. If the project has been submitted for funding consideration elsewhere, the amount(s) requested or secured from other sources, and whether the funds requested/secured are federal or non-federal should be included.

Additional budget development guidance is available at www.restoration.noaa.gov/partnerresources. NOAA will review the budget information in applications to determine if costs are allowable, allocable, reasonable, and realistic. The narrative budget justification should be sufficiently detailed to enable a clear understanding

of the cost breakdown and calculations used to derive the line item subtotals in each object class of the Form SF-424A.

4. Data Sharing Plan (1-2 pages)

The data sharing plan should include descriptions of the types of environmental data and information created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; policies addressing data stewardship and preservation; procedures for providing access, sharing, and security; and prior experience in publishing such data. The plan is required as part of NOAA's data sharing policy described in Section VI.B.3 below, and will be reviewed as part of the Evaluation Criteria under V.A.1. Examples are provided at www.restoration.noaa.gov/partnerresources.

C. Submission Dates and Times

Applications must be postmarked, provided to a delivery service, or received by www.Grants.gov by 11:59 PM Eastern time on July 2, 2015. Use of a delivery service must be documented with a receipt. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted. See Section F. for more information on application submission methods. In addition, applicants are advised that they must provide approval from the State Governor as evidenced by a letter or other form of documented correspondence for the proposed project by July 31, 2015. Before awards are made, NOAA will verify that correspondence from the State Governor's office has been received.

D. Intergovernmental Review

Applications submitted under the FFO are subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." Any applicant submitting an application for funding is required to complete item 16 on Form SF-424 regarding clearance by the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC). To find out about and comply with a State's process under Executive Order 12372, the names, addresses and phone numbers of participating SPOC's are listed on the Office of Management and Budget's home page at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc.

E. Funding Restrictions

Pre-award costs are generally unallowable, however, pre-award costs may be considered during pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA representatives. Incurring pre-award costs before the NOAA GMD provides an award document (generally on Form CD-450) is at the applicant's own risk. The earliest date for receipt of awards for this

funding opportunity is anticipated to be October 1, 2015.

The budget may include indirect (facilities & administrative (F&A)) costs if the applicant has an established indirect cost rate with the federal government. As defined at 2 C.F.R. § 200.56, indirect (F&A) costs are incurred for a common or joint purpose benefitting more than one cost objective, and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefitted, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved (e.g., lights, rent, water, and insurance). A copy of the current, approved negotiated indirect (F&A) cost agreement with the federal government should be included with the application. In accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f), if an applicant has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate, they may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC) or describe all costs as direct costs in the budget narrative.

F. Other Submission Requirements

Applicants should submit applications electronically through www.Grants.gov. Users of Grants.gov will be able to download a copy of the application package, complete it off line, and then upload and submit the application via the Grants.gov site. If an applicant has problems downloading the application forms from Grants.gov, contact Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@Grants.gov.

We highly recommend that applicants do not wait until the application deadline to begin the application process through Grants.gov.

To use Grants.gov, applicants must have a DUNS number and current registration in the Central Contractor Registration or System for Award Management (CCR/SAM) system. Applicants should allow a minimum of five days to complete the CCR/SAM registration; registration is required only once, but must be renewed periodically. In all, there are approximately five steps needed to set up your organization's Grants.gov account (see <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>). After electronic submission of the application, applicants will receive an automatic acknowledgment from Grants.gov. Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be accompanied by THREE automated responses (the first confirms receipt; the second confirms that the submission is acceptable and timely; and the third validates that the application has been forwarded to NOAA for further processing). If all notifications are not received, applicants should follow up with both the Grants.gov help desk and the NOAA Restoration Center to confirm NOAA receipt of the complete submission.

PLEASE NOTE: It may take Grants.gov up to two business days to validate or reject the application. Please keep this in mind in developing your submission timeline. Applicants

should allow themselves sufficient time to submit their application to Grants.gov in advance of the deadline to ensure applications have been submitted successfully, as the deadline for submission CANNOT be extended. If applicants are unsure about the success of their submission to Grants.gov, applicants may also mail a hard copy application; see below for details. If an applicant does not wish to use the preferred submission method (Grants.gov), a hard copy application must be postmarked, or provided to a delivery service and documented with a receipt, by the deadline under "Submission Dates and Times," Section IV.C and sent to: NOAA Restoration Center, NOAA Fisheries, 1315 East West Highway, Rm. 14853, Silver Spring, MD 20910. ATTN: NOAA Coastal Ecosystem Resiliency Project Applications.

Applications postmarked or provided to a delivery service after that time will not be considered for funding. Applications submitted via the U.S. Postal Service must have an official postmark; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. Applications provided to a private delivery service (e.g. FedEx) must be documented with a receipt. In any event, applications received later than five business days following the postmark closing date will not be accepted. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted. If submitting a hard copy application, the federal forms with signature lines (Forms SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, CD-511) MUST be signed with an original inked signature; failure to complete this task shall result in disqualification from this competition. See Sections III.C and IV.C for relevant information regarding submitting a hard copy. Per Section III.C, applications that do not follow these requirements will not be reviewed.

G. Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number and System for Award Management (SAM)

Each eligible applicant is required to: (1) Be registered in SAM before submitting its application; (2) provide a valid DUNS number in its application; and (3) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. The Federal awarding agency may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the Federal awarding agency is ready to make a Federal award, the Federal awarding agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

Reviewers will assign scores to applications ranging from 0 to 100 points based on the following five standard NOAA evaluation criteria and respective weights specified below. Applications that best address these criteria will be most competitive.

1. Importance and Applicability (35 points): This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state or local activities. For this competition, applications will be evaluated based on the following:

- To what extent does the application describe an issue limiting the resiliency of marine and coastal ecosystems to extreme weather events or changing environmental conditions, the proposed project's outcome goal(s), the actions and on-the-ground restoration to be undertaken to enhance resiliency and reduce risk, and propose actions with a measureable impact on the ecosystem, target species, and surrounding coastal communities to benefit from the proposed habitat restoration project? (7 points)
- To what extent does the proposed project restore coastal ecosystems in a manner that maximizes resiliency to extreme weather events and changing environmental conditions thereby decreasing the vulnerability of communities, including physical (e.g. projected impacts to critical infrastructure) and socio-economic (e.g. communities with high unemployment, elderly populations, etc.) vulnerability? (7 points)
- How great is the potential of the proposed project to restore or create resilient habitat for the benefit of: 1) species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) under NOAA jurisdiction; 2) species managed by NOAA under the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act, including projects benefitting Essential Fish Habitat; or 3) other species with a nexus to NMFS management such as through the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act, Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, Coral Reef Conservation Act, or NMFS Species of Concern? (6 points)
- To what extent is the proposed project a high priority as described in Section I.B Program Priorities? (4 points)
- To what extent does the proposed project meet NOAA's mission to protect and restore marine and coastal habitats by delivering tangible, specific results that are measurable and relevant to NOAA performance measures such as 1) habitat acres restored, 2) stream miles opened for migratory fish passage, or 3) similar measureable outputs (e.g.

socio-economic) that directly result from the project? (5 points)

- To what extent will the proposed project yield environmentally compatible socio-economic benefits such as increased economic activity, enhanced recreation including fishing, increased value of property, changes in human well-being, improved or protected infrastructure, decreased flooding impacts, elimination of safety hazards, and/or reduced maintenance costs? (5 points)
- Does the application include a Data/Information Sharing Plan including descriptions of the types of environmental data and information created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; policies addressing data stewardship and preservation; procedures for providing access, sharing, and security; and prior experience in publishing such data? (1 point)

2. Technical/Scientific Merit (25 points): This criterion assesses whether the project activity or approach is technically sound, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear goals and objectives. For this competition, applications will be evaluated based on the extent to which the applicant has described a realistic and thorough implementation plan that includes:

- To what extent is the proposed project feasible from a biological, engineering and social perspective, including whether the proposed approach is technically sound, safe for the public, and uses appropriate methods and personnel? (5 points)
- To what extent does the application completely describe the proposed restoration actions, current status of the project (e.g. 60% design plans are complete), permitting and environmental compliance status, key milestones throughout the course of the project, and a realistic time frame to reach those milestones within the proposed award period? Will the project implement on-the-ground restoration actions within the first 12 months of the award period? (5 points)
- To what extent does the proposed project site and methodology increase ecosystem resiliency and account for or provide for adaptation to known or potential climate change impacts? (5 points)
- To what extent will the proposed project have a measurable impact? Will the project measure progress towards broad goals and evaluate success across clearly identified, measurable objectives using adequate and meaningful pre- and post-implementation monitoring for both ecological and societal elements? (5 points)
- How great is the potential of the proposed project to be sustainable and provide lasting benefits to maintain ecosystem resiliency for the target species and their habitat? Is

there evidence that the applicant has chosen the most self-sustaining restoration technique that accomplishes the project's outcome goals? Is there land owner/land manager support, documented in the application (e.g., a support letter)? (5 points)

3. Overall Qualifications of Applicant (10 points): This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to support the proposed award. For this competition, applications will be evaluated based on the following (as demonstrated by attached resumes, past project experience, and accomplishments of the key technical and financial staff):

- Does the applicant have the capacity and knowledge to conduct the scope and scale of the proposed work, as indicated by the qualifications and past experience of the project leaders and/or partners in designing, implementing and effectively managing and overseeing projects that restore marine and coastal habitats? (5 points)
- Does the applicant describe the necessary experience, facilities, equipment and administrative resources available to successfully implement proposed restoration actions and responsibilities associated with managing a federal grant award? (5 points)

4. Project Costs (20 points): This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project's needs and time-frame. For this competition, applications will be evaluated on the following:

- Has the applicant demonstrated that a significant impact and benefit will be generated at a reasonable cost, based on the applicant's stated objectives and time frame? If funds are requested for partial support of a larger project or for a project with multiple sites or phases, the application should include the full project budget and/or a budget for each site or phase to place the funding request in context. (4 points)
- Has the applicant demonstrated a realistic understanding of project costs by providing a budget (broken down the object classes on Form SF-424A) that provides sufficient detail and credible cost estimates and justifications for both federal and non-federal shares? (5 points)
- Does the proposed budget direct the majority of funds, including funds for salaries, to implement the restoration actions (e.g. on-the-ground implementation) described in proposed project, compared to the percentage used for general program support including administration, salaries, travel, and indirect costs? (5 points)
- Does the proposed non-federal match meet or surpass the required 2:1 level federal to non-federal match ratio and to what extent is the non-federal match contribution confirmed? (6 points)

5. Outreach and Education (10 points): NOAA assesses whether the award can deliver a focused and effective education and outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the nation's natural resources. For this competition, applications will be evaluated based on the following:

- To what extent does the application describe community involvement that demonstrates that the proposed project has been put forward by common agreement? To what degree does the proposed project have community support as demonstrated by a diversity of partners and/or sponsorship (letters of support, confirmed contributions) from local entities, tribes, local and state governments, and/or members of Congress? (5 points)
- Does the application include public outreach as it relates to the proposed project, including plans to disseminate information on: 1) ecosystem resiliency goals and results; 2) sources of funding and other support provided, such as the involvement of partners; and 3) the potential for the proposed project to encourage future resiliency efforts and protection of marine and coastal habitats or complement other local restoration or conservation activities? (5 points)

B. Review and Selection Process

Applications will undergo an initial administrative review to determine if they are eligible and complete, per Section III. Eligible applications will undergo a technical review, ranking, and selection process to determine how well they meet the program priorities and evaluation criteria of this solicitation and the mission and goals of NOAA.

Eligible applications will be evaluated by three or more merit reviewers as part of a technical review based on the Evaluation Criteria listed above. After the technical review, a panel may meet to make final recommendations to the Selecting Official (SO) regarding which applications best meet the program objectives and priorities (Sections I.A. and I.B.). If the panel is convened, it will be comprised of federal employees and may meet in person or by teleconference, video conference, or other electronic means to discuss applications.

The panel will be presented with the top ranked applications, per the results of the technical review, technical review scores, and comments for each application. The panel will rate all top ranked applications on the following scale:

3- Excellent-- Application exceptionally addresses program priorities outlined in Sections I.A. and I.B., and was highly responsive to Evaluation Criteria;

2-Good-- Application partially addresses program priorities outlined in Sections I.A. and I.B. and was strongly responsive to Evaluation Criteria; or

1-Fair-- Application marginally addresses program priorities outlined in Sections I.A.

and I.B. and was moderately responsive to Evaluation Criteria.

This rating will be presented to the SO for funding consideration and will be the primary consideration of the SO in deciding which applications will be recommended to the NOAA GMD, pending the application of selection factors below.

C. Selection Factors

The SO anticipates recommending applications for funding in rank order unless an application is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the following selection factors:

- (1) Availability of funding;
- (2) Balance/distribution of funds: a) by geographic area, b) by type of institutions, c) by type of partners, d) by research areas; or e) by project types;
- (3) Whether this project duplicates other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other federal agencies;
- (4) Program priorities and policy factors set out in Sections I.A. and I.B.;
- (5) An applicant's prior award performance;
- (6) Partnerships and/or participation of targeted groups; and
- (7) Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the NOAA GMD.

Hence, awards may not necessarily be made to the highest-scored applications. In addition, as noted above, applicants must provide NOAA with documentation of approval from the State Governor for the proposed project by July 31, 2015 in order to receive an award. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their application was not among those recommended for funding. Unsuccessful applications submitted in hard copy will be kept on file in accordance with NOAA records requirements and then destroyed.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

NOAA will attempt to notify highly-ranked applicants by August 31, 2015. The earliest anticipated start date for awards will be October 1, 2015, but awards may not be available until December 1, 2015. Applicants that initiate award activities in anticipation of federal funding do so at their own risk, and are advised not to begin award-related work until a notice of award is received electronically from the NOAA GMD in Grants Online, NOAA's online financial assistance management system.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Successful applicants may be asked to modify work plans or budgets, and will be required to demonstrate receipt of State Governor approval for the proposed project by July 31, 2015. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities including monitoring, the award duration, and specific NOAA cooperative involvement with the activities of each Coastal Ecosystem Resilience project will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, the NOAA GMD, and NOAA staff that will administer these restoration awards.

To enable the use of a universal identifier and to enhance the quality of information available to the public as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006, to the extent applicable, any application awarded funds in response to this announcement will be required to use the CCR/SAM and Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System and be subject to reporting requirements, as identified in OMB guidance published at 2 CFR Parts 25, 170 (2010), http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr25_main_02.tpl.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements

Successful applicants that accept a NOAA award under this solicitation will be bound by the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements, which are codified at 2 C.F.R. Part 200 (Uniform Guidance) as well as Department of Commerce and NOAA standard terms and conditions. In accordance with the Federal Register notice published on (79 FR 75871) and the regulation at 2 C.F.R. §1327.101, effective December 26, 2014, the DOC adopted the Uniform Guidance streamlines the language from eight Office of Management and Budget (OMB) circulars, including cost principles (OMB Circulars A-21, A-87, A 122) and administrative requirements (OMB Circulars A-102 and A 110), into one consolidated set of guidance applicable to federal assistance awards. Note that the OMB Uniform Guidance supersedes DOC's uniform administrative requirements set out at 15 C.F.R. parts 14 and 24. In addition, the audit requirements of the OMB Uniform Guidance applies to audits of non-Federal entities beginning on or after December 26, 2014. The OMB Uniform Guidance as codified at 2 C.F.R. Part 200 may be found at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2014-title2-vol1/pdf/CFR-2014-title2-vol1-subtitleA-chapII-subchap-id302.pdf>. Additional information on the substance of and transition to the OMB Uniform Guidance may be found at <https://cfo.gov/cofar>.

Award documentation will set out the terms and conditions applicable to each award and will be provided in the award package in Grants Online, NOAA's online financial assistance

management system. In addition, award documents provided by the NOAA GMD through the Grants Online award package may contain program-specific special award conditions. These award conditions are subject to change prior to award but are provided at www.restoration.noaa.gov/partnerresources.

2. NEPA Requirements

NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts for individual resiliency projects as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website, <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/>, including NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, and the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) implementation regulations. Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under the description of their activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, safety concerns, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g., the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems).

Applicants are encouraged to consult with NOAA as early as possible on proposed projects to discuss NEPA considerations, and should review the restoration-specific environmental compliance documents available at www.restoration.noaa.gov/partnerresources. Funds will not be released until NOAA completes the requisite NEPA analysis and documentation. Funds may be withheld by the GMD under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental law compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment of impacts that the award may have on the environment.

Applicants proposing activities that cannot be categorically excluded from further NEPA analysis, that are not covered by existing NOAA programmatic NEPA documents, or whose activities are not covered under another agency's NEPA compliance procedures, which can be analyzed and adopted by NOAA, will be informed after the technical review stage. Such applicants may be requested to assist in the preparation of an EA prior to an award being made, or provide for NOAA review a copy of an EA/EIS that covers proposed activities if one exists. Awardees will be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposed sub-award or sub-contract projects, especially for projects requiring NOAA to consult under the ESA. Failure to agree to do so shall be grounds for not awarding funds or for terminating an award.

3. NOAA's Data Sharing Policy

Environmental data and information collected and/or created under NOAA grants/cooperative agreements must be made visible, accessible, and independently understandable to general users, free of charge or at minimal cost, in a timely manner (typically no later than two years after the data are collected or created), except where limited by law, regulation, policy or security requirements. The Data/Information Sharing Plan (and any subsequent revisions or updates) must be made publicly available at the time of award and, thereafter, will be posted with the published data. Failing to share environmental data and information in accordance with the submitted Data/Information Sharing Plan may lead to disallowed costs and be considered by NOAA when making future award decisions.

More information about the Data Sharing Policy is available on NOAA's Environmental Data Management Committee website at: www.nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/PD.DSP.php

4. Certifications Regarding Tax Liability and Felony Criminal Convictions

In accordance with current Federal appropriations law, NOAA will provide a successful applicant a form to be completed by its authorized representatives certifying that the applicant has no Federally-assessed unpaid or delinquent tax liability or recent felony criminal convictions under any Federal law.

5. Limitation of Liability

In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs if these programs fail to receive funding or are cancelled because of other agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds.

C. Reporting

Progress reports shall use the NOAA Restoration Center's progress report narrative format and form approved by OMB under control number 0648 0472 or subsequent renewals. This form will be provided to awardees by the NOAA Federal Program Officer. In addition, award recipients proposing multiple site locations may be required to complete individual reports for each site, or provide a project/site list including status and expenditures.

Narrative progress reports shall be due on the same fiscal year schedule as financial reports (Oct. 30 and April 30) covering April 1-September 30 and October 1-March 31, respectively. A comprehensive final report covering all activities during the award period is required and must be received by NOAA within 90 days after the end date of this award.

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 includes a

requirement for awardees of applicable Federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under Federal assistance awards issued in FY 2011 or later. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all subawards of \$25,000 and over.

VII. Agency Contacts

Supplemental Guidance regarding application writing, a checklist to submit a complete application, and FAQs about this FFO and the Regional Coastal Resilience Grants Program being administered by NOAA's National Ocean Service can be found at www.restoration.noaa.gov/partnerresources and www.habitat.noaa.gov/funding/coastalresiliency.html, respectively. For further information contact Melanie Gange at (301) 427-8664, or by e-mail at Melanie.Gange@noaa.gov. Prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to contact NOAA Restoration Center staff before submitting an application to discuss their NOAA Coastal Ecosystem Resiliency project ideas with respect to technical merit and NOAA's objectives. NOAA will make every effort to respond to prospective applicants on a first come, first served basis. These discussions will not include review of draft proposals or site visits during the application period.

VIII. Other Information

The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of December 30, 2014 (79 FR 78390) are applicable to this solicitation. Funds awarded cannot necessarily pay for all the costs that the recipient might incur in the course of carrying out an award. Generally, costs that are allowable include salaries, equipment and supplies, as long as these are "necessary and reasonable" specifically for the purpose of the award. Allowable costs are determined by reference to the OMB Uniform Guidance codified at 2 C.F.R. Part 200. All cost reimbursement sub-awards (e.g., subgrants, subcontracts) are subject to those federal cost principles applicable to the particular type of organization concerned.

Prior notice and an opportunity for public comment are not required by the Administrative Procedure Act (5 U.S.C. 553 (a) (2)) or by any other law for this document concerning grants, benefits, and contracts. Because notice and opportunity for comment are not required pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 553 or any other law, the analytical requirements of the Regulatory Flexibility Act (5 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) are not applicable. Therefore, a regulatory flexibility analysis has not been prepared.

This action has been determined to be not significant for purposes of Executive Order

12866 (Regulatory Impact Review).

The use of the standard NOAA grant application package referred to in this notice involves collection-of-information requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act. The use of Forms SF- 424, SF-424A, SF-424B, SF-LLL, and CD-346 have been approved by OMB under the respective control numbers 4040-0004, 4040-0006, 4040-0007, 0348-0046, and 0605-0001.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person is required to respond to, nor shall any person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with, a collection of information subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act, unless that collection displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Applications submitted in response to this FFO may be subject to requests for release under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. § 552). In the event that an application contains information or data that the applicant deems to be confidential commercial information which is exempt from disclosure under FOIA, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as Privileged, Confidential, Commercial or Financial Information. Based on these markings, the confidentiality of the contents of those pages will be protected to the extent permitted by law. Department of Commerce regulations implementing FOIA are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, Public Information. These regulations set forth rules for the Department regarding making requested materials, information, and records publicly available under the FOIA.